

Sustainable Practices for the Landscape Professional

Save time, money and labor by landscaping, so that less vegetative material goes to the landfill. Reducing waste means not generating it in the first place. To help reduce the amount of plant debris disposed in San Diego County, start by selecting the right plants for the right location as well as an appropriate watering, fertilizing and pruning schedule.

Plant trimmings can be reused as mulch, grasscycling or compost while helping to improve soils, create healthy gardens and reduce the load to the landfill. Designing and maintaining landscapes to reduce landfill waste can create year-round benefits for you, your client and the environment.

Appropriate Plant Selection

Choose plants to match the microclimate and soil conditions.

Choose plants that can grow to their natural size in the space available to them.

Replace sheared hedges with plants that can grow to their natural shape and size.



Proper Pruning

Pruning is the removal or reduction of plant parts that are not required, are no longer effective, or that are of no use to the plant.

More trees are killed or damaged each year from improper pruning than by pests.

Pruning effectively will redirect more energy for development of flowers, fruit and limbs that remain.

Proper plant selection for the location minimizes the need to prune and keeps green waste to a minimum.

For more information, visit:

<http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/extension/pruning/pruning.html>



Grasscycling – Don't Trash the Grass!

Leave the clippings on the lawn after mowing.

Mow frequently and when grass is dry for best results.

Nutrients are returned to the soil as clippings decompose. This can reduce the need for expensive fertilizers.

Grasscycling reduces green waste and saves time and money while creating a healthy lawn.

On-site grasscycling avoids transportation and disposal costs.





Green Waste Recycling

If you need to remove plant debris from your job site, keep the “clean green” separated and transport it to one of several facilities around the County. Clean green disposal fees are less expensive than solid waste fees. Many clean green sites also offer low cost mulch and compost that can be purchased in bulk.

See tipping fees insert for local facilities that accept clean green plant debris.

On-site Composting

Start and maintain a compost bin on-site and encourage your clients to add their fruit and vegetable scraps to it. On-site composting avoids transportation and disposal costs for green waste. Materials such as grass clippings, which are largely water, rapidly decompose in a compost pile.

The finished compost makes great soil amendment which helps to conserve water, return nutrients to the soil and saves money on the purchase of bagged compost.

For more information on composting, visit:
www.solanacenter.org for discount compost and worm bins.

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Organics/Landscaping/KeepGreen/Compost.htm#On%20Site>



Make Your Own Mulch

Leaving plant debris on the soil or chipping it and distributing evenly on the surface recycles organic matter and nutrients while nurturing soil organisms and suppressing weeds. Incorporating mulch around plantings is also a proven method of conserving water. **Designate** areas under the tree and shrub canopy to allow fallen leaves to form a natural mulch layer. The mulch layers form a ring around trees protecting the trunks and stems from mower and tractor damage. This mulch ring also eliminates the need to spray with herbicides for weed control. Remove leaves if they carry disease that can infect other plants or if leaves are falling in areas subject to stormwater runoff.



Plant In the Right Place

Don't plant trees and shrubs adjacent to buildings and walkways. Leave at least a yard or more between the plant and the structures. This will protect the walls and sidewalks, and reduce the amount of pruning over the lifetime of the plants.



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